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EASTERN EUROPEAN INTELLIGENCER

OCI #0974/72
22 Sept 1972

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State Dept. review completed

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Romania Condemns Rightist Terrorism

An editorial in Scinteia on 21 September labelled the recent hijacking of an SAS airliner by ustashi elements as "an act of aerial piracy" by a "fascist band." The editorial asserted that Romanian public opinion condemns such "fascist-terrorist" acts as inimical to international detente. It also called on all countries to take firm action in controlling terror organizations "such as ustashi, chetniks, Iron Guardists, and other fascist remnants."

Issued the day after publication of the communique summarizing Premier Maurer's 12-19 September visit to Yugoslavia, the editorial is undoubtedly related to the current Yugoslav diplomatic campaign to control ustashi activities outside Yugoslavia as well as to the communique's emphasis on the very close relations between Belgrade and Bucharest.

Not only the timing but also the context of the editorial make it stand out. Thus, terrorism per se is condemned, but it is done solely within the context of rightist terrorism. Although the Romanians equally oppose terrorism by leftist groups such as the Black Septembrists, Bucharest thus far has only privately made known its official opposition to Arab terrorism. Romanian reluctance to go public on the issue of Arab terrorists reflects Bucharest's self-imposed requirement

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of walking a tight-rope between the Arab world and Israel. As the only member of the Warsaw Pact still maintaining diplomatic relations with Tel Aviv, Romania's foreign policy of "friendship with everybody" occasionally requires agonizing efforts to maintain balance. Since the first of the year, for example, Bucharest has engaged in a carefully constructed campaign to woo the Arab world, while putting itself forward as an objective viewer of events in the Middle East.

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Romania and Gabon Establish Diplomatic Relations

Representation will be at the ambassadorial level, according to an announcement in Gabon's official government daily on 20 September. A Gabon official has told US diplomats in Libreville that he expects both countries to begin the process of establishing a physical presence shortly.

Romania is the first communist country with which Gabon has established diplomatic relations. Bucharest's interest in having official ties with Libreville coincides with the emphasis it places on the important role of "small and medium-sized countries."

Although the smallest in area (103,000 square miles) and population (480,000) of the territories of former French Equatorial Africa, Gabon reportedly has substantial mineral resources. In recent months, the Romanians showed considerable interest in entering into joint agreements with African countries for the development of mineral resources. Gabon may loom as a candidate for such an overture.

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